

Park Rangers SLI Report

July 1, 2010



**Report to the Seattle City Council in Response to Statements of
Legislative Intent 2008/114-1-A-3 and 2010/77-2-A-1
regarding evaluation of the Park Rangers Pilot Program**

Seattle Parks and Recreation

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- Dawn Blanch at Parks Volunteer Programs
- Victoria Schoenberg and Adrienne Caver-Hall at Center City Parks Program

Executive Summary

This report will provide a history and background of the Park Ranger Program, analysis of data pertaining to crime trends over the past two years in 10 downtown parks, a description of rangers' community involvement, a community survey and indicators deduced from that survey, and an analysis of the success of the Park Ranger Program. The report will conclude with recommendations for the future of the program.

The data collected demonstrates that after two years patrolling downtown parks, crime and negative behavior is significantly down. Police data collected from the 10 destination parks in downtown shows a decline in crime in all 10 parks between 2007 and 2009. This ranges from a 14% drop at Cal Anderson Park to a 90% drop at Waterfront Park. Public sentiment mirrors the statistical trends. In a community survey, 70% of people thought Park Rangers deterred illegal and anti-social behavior in the parks they patrol.

These trends in downtown parks are due, in part, to a comprehensive approach to increasing positive activities in these parks. Park Rangers collaborate with and support programming and maintenance activities to ensure both operate without resistance from problem patrons. Examples include: staffing all evening and night special events (e.g. Dancing 'til Dusk, movies in the park), patrolling at a park during daytime events, clearing patrons when work needs to be completed by maintenance staff, alerting Parks' maintenance staff to problems, and repairing safety-related maintenance issues. Working together allows maintenance and programming staff to safely and efficiently complete their jobs, and helps patrons attending events feels safer. Of the people surveyed, 69% said they would be more likely to attend an event if a park ranger was going to be there.

Park Rangers work closely with community groups to help address specific social problems and needs specific to certain groups. This includes joining the citywide youth outreach effort, hosting a youth outreach fair, and working with local homeless outreach groups to identify people in need. Informally, rangers meet regularly with several community leaders, businesses, and organizations. Park Rangers

also work closely with the Seattle Police Department, attending role calls, trainings and collaborating in the field to address park specific problems. Assistance from Seattle Police Department (SPD) notably contributes to the success of the Ranger Program

To build capacity in the program, rangers have increased their breadth of activities. In August 2008 rangers began bike patrols, which help increase visibility and mobility in the busy downtown. In winter 2008 rangers became instructors in Management of Aggressive Behavior (MOAB), a course teaching principles of detecting and diffusing hostile situations; 151 park employees have already attended this class. In 2009 rangers took a basic Spanish course to increase their ability to communicate with Spanish speaking patrons. Rangers continue looking for other ways to improve the program and its utility to the public.

Overall, the Park Rangers are playing a significant role in revitalizing the downtown parks. Letters from neighborhood groups underscore the community's desire to maintain the Park Ranger Program. (See Attachments A, B, C and D.) 82% of people surveyed believe Park Rangers contribute to a welcoming atmosphere and 75% would like to see the program expanded. The current trend for world class cities is to have a dedicated group of Park Rangers to patrol the parks. Park Rangers deter negative behavior, increase safety, the perception of safety, and free up police time to tend to public safety issues outside the parks. The detail in this report will demonstrate thoroughly the need and effectiveness of the Park Ranger Program.

Introduction

In 2008 the Seattle City Council approved a Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) 114-1-A-3 calling on Seattle Parks and Recreation to conduct an evaluation of the Park Ranger Pilot Program. In 2009 the Council approved SLI 77-2-A-1 which provides more detailed guidance on the City Council's expectations for that evaluation and calls on Parks to "provide a report and briefing, detailing the parameters of the program evaluation, to the Council's Parks & Seattle Center Committee by Monday, February 8, 2010."

Parks briefed the Council's Parks and Seattle Center Committee on its approach to the SLI at the February 18 meeting and received comments from the committee members and Council staff about it. The briefing also included information on the Center City Parks Task Force work and Park Rangers' activities. There was general concurrence that the Department's proposal was an appropriate way to proceed. Based on that input, Parks has gathered information from the various sources discussed and, in this full report due July 1, 2010, presents the analysis and conclusions from them.

Councilmembers also expressed support for the Center City Parks Task Force strategy, in which the Rangers play an important role: promoting *park safety, security and civil behavior*; supporting *park operations and maintenance* by calling in work orders; supporting *park programming, special events and commercial activity* through their presence at events and their contact with neighboring businesses; and providing key representation for *community outreach, involvement and partnership*. These strategies are synergistic, and their combined effect is growing with time.

Center City Parks Task Force Framework

The Park Ranger Program was established in 2008 as a key piece of the Center City Task Force Recommendations, as presented in the 2006 Downtown Parks Renaissance Report that proposes actions to revitalize downtown parks. The Task Force was established, and prepared the Renaissance Report (<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/downtown.asp>) to address the perception and reality that downtown parks were unsightly, underutilized, and illegal behavior was persistent. The Renaissance Report covers three critical components – maintenance, programming, and security – the first two conducted by Parks maintenance crews and Parks Center City programming office, respectively, in collaboration with the Park Rangers. There is also coordination of effort on the plan with the Metropolitan Improvement District's (MID) ambassadors and Seattle Police Department (SPD). These are coordinated and ongoing efforts to build the downtown parks into welcoming gathering points for the community.



The purpose of the Park Ranger Program is to improve the real and perceived safety and comfort of those who visit the Center City parks. The implementation of the Park Ranger Program is one of several recommended actions taken to improve the appearance and presentation of Center City parks, including activation through increased quantity, quality and diversity of events, making physical improvements to the parks, and the addition of security via Park Rangers and the improved presence and patrol by the Seattle Police Department.

The Task Force strategy is designed to be comprehensive, as simple enforcement leads mainly to displacement of negative behaviors from parks to other areas of downtown. As negative behaviors stem from social problems and are not restricted to parks, Seattle Parks and Recreation recognizes our

limited ability to control those factors, including economic stress, lack of adequate inventory of low-income and transition housing, location of human service providers, substance abuse, and mental health treatment issues. With those considerations, Seattle Parks and specifically Park Rangers work collaboratively with several outreach groups, Seattle Police, and MID to address social issues.

The Park Ranger Program

Implementation of the Park Ranger Program has been dynamic, responding to both changing conditions and deeper understanding of the parks and the communities they serve. The Park Rangers review and adapt their activities and emphasis at least quarterly. Rangers patrol daily all Center City parks between 7 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. during their winter schedule. The summer schedule, from June 1 – Sept. 15, has Rangers in parks from 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Since May 2008, the Park Rangers have enhanced their effectiveness by gaining the authority to issue park exclusions (June 2008) and Notices of Civil Infraction (August 2009). However, these are secondary to enforcement by presence and interactions with patrons. The program provides the consistent presence of professional, knowledgeable, and uniformed staff seen by all segments of the public in support of civility.



Park Rangers patrol in two-person teams, focusing their efforts in 10 downtown parks to deter crime and anti-social behavior by contact with individuals whose behavior interferes with others enjoying the parks. From spring to fall, the two shifts cover daylight hours between 6 a.m. and 8:30 p.m., going later for event or community meeting coverage. In winter, coverage is generally from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Patrols are mixed, including bicycle, foot and vehicle. The patrol routes are flexibly scheduled to respond to current conditions, such as troubled areas, to assist at activities, such as community events, and to avoid predictability which scofflaws might rely on.

Chronology of Park Ranger Program implementation:

- January 2008 Park Ranger Pilot Program funded
- May 2008 Park Rangers begin patrol in downtown parks
- June 2008 Park Rangers given authority to issue notices of park exclusion
- August 2009 Park Rangers given authority to issue notices of park code civil infraction
- February 2010 Program evaluation plan due
- July 2010 Park Rangers evaluation report due

The 10 parks that Rangers patrol include:

1. Cal Anderson Park (including Bobby Morris Playfield)
2. City Hall Park
3. Freeway Park
4. Hing Hay Park
5. (South) Lake Union Park
6. Occidental Square
7. Pier 62/63
8. Victor Steinbrueck Park
9. Waterfront Park
10. Westlake Park

Some important focal points of the program are:

- Patrol during times and at locations of highest activity;
- Staff special events and programs to facilitate a safe and welcoming atmosphere for facilitators and attendees;
- Train Parks and MID staff and community members in Management of Aggressive Behavior (MOAB), a nationally recognized training to improve the safety of staff and patrons;
- Contact stakeholders in the downtown area to best carry out our mission, and to support them;
- Provide information to tourists about Seattle, attractions, eateries, and events;
- Advise park employees on safety and security concerns;
- Conduct outreach with homeless, underprivileged youth, chemical dependents, and interface with the agencies that support them;
- Work with maintenance staff to expeditiously correct maintenance problems;
- Perform minor maintenance to parks as related to safety concerns;
- Collaborate with Parks' maintenance staff when situations present difficulty for them to perform job functions;
- Coordinate with SPD to best perform the job functions of both agencies.



Topics Raised in the SLI and Seattle Parks and Recreation's Approach

The SLI points out positive behaviors that should be encouraged. These include respectful and lawful behavior, community involvement with park spaces and activities, creating a welcoming condition of parks, and regular recreational and social use. Behaviors described negatively in the SLI that should be discouraged or eliminated include crime and antisocial behavior, actual or perceived unsafe spaces, and public property damage. As discussed in the section on the Center City Parks Task Force, these are issues that cannot be treated in isolation by only enforcement and only in parks.

There are many actors involved and many agencies play a role in addressing these issues. By looking at who has authority or responsibility, we identified where we might find data that could help characterize changes in the condition of downtown parks. In general, such data relates to incidences that we would like to reduce, whereas general park usage must be tracked by broad surveys over time.

The Park Ranger Program's inception began rather quickly with only a few months from approval of the program to the start of its operation. This was not sufficient time to take a credible "before" survey. The Park Ranger Program began two years into the work already being conducted by the Center City Parks Task Force. With that in mind and the synergy among the Center City Parks strategies, it is not possible attribute improvements solely to the Park Rangers. As requested in SLI 77-2-A-1, in place of park ranger-focused statistics, we identified a range of data sources that provide a basis for comparing conditions now and prior to park ranger operation.

As park ranger operations are within parks, we have focused as much as possible on data relating to the 10 downtown parks, not to downtown more broadly.

Generally, the program evaluation compared data from 2007 (or in a few cases early 2008 before Park Rangers became active) and data from 2009. Full year comparison data is necessary to account for the cyclical effects of weather, attendance, event schedules, etc. The available data was quantitative, except for a rating question in the Center City Parks 2009 survey. By initiating a park ranger survey and coordinating it with the Center City Parks survey, we are able to assess how park visitors and neighbors perceive their experience in downtown parks. Data collected pertains to as many as possible of the 10 parks that are the focus of the Park Rangers' activity. The intent of using these quantitative sources is to provide comparable information from objective sources before and after the start of Park Rangers operation. So, data was collected across these periods.

Existing data sources used are:

- A. Seattle Police Department (SPD)
- B. Metropolitan Improvement District (MID)
- C. Animal Control
- D. Seattle Fire Department (SFD)
- E. Parks Work Order System
- F. Parks Volunteer Office
- G. Sports field bookings at Cal Anderson
- H. Events Scheduling Office
- I. Park Rangers Log
- J. Center City Parks Task Force Program 2009 survey

New sources for assessment information were originally proposed to include both surveys and interviews. With current staffing constraints, we were able to conduct the survey only, which included individuals and groups neighboring downtown parks. We have also included letters from downtown organizations that detail their thoughts about the Park Ranger Program. (See Attachments A, B, C and D.)

Individual data sources were used to address multiple topics raised in the SLI, indicating the need to examine some issues more broadly than the focus of a particular question.

Analysis of Data from Existing Sources

There were some park closures that occurred between 2007 and 2009 that may affect activity and/or use of parks, particularly impacting data collected by Parks and Recreation.

- Victor Steinbrueck Park – small project work July to October 2007.
- Westlake Park – renovation work September 2007 to April 2008.
- Freeway Park – construction ongoing since November 2007.
- Hing Hay Park – renovation work September 2007 to April 2009.
- Lake Union Park – park development phase I construction started July 2006 and completed March 2008; Phase II to be completed August 2010.

While initially proposed as a data source, an inquiry to the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods found that the number of applications to the Neighborhood Matching Fund from throughout the city had more

than doubled from 2007 to 2009. Given the relatively small number of applications for the downtown area, this increase overall would mask or distort any effect related to the Park Rangers, so this indicator of impact was not used for this study.

There was only one vendor at one downtown park that was consistently present over the past three years, so this measure also was not used. This food cart business did see an increase in reported revenue over time.

Seattle Police Department

Incident reports are collected from 911 calls and police reports. Full year data is consistent, so comparison between 2007 and 2009 was possible. The data request asked for selection by location near or in parks; however, some incidents clearly occurred outside parks, notably those involving automobiles. Data is filtered for enforcement actions relevant to parks (no false alarm, automobile, burglary, missing person, traffic), also leaving out cancelled calls and administrative actions.

Reports included for analysis are:

- Physical arrest made
- Citation - criminal
- No arrest made
- Citation – non-criminal
- Other report made, i.e., trespass admonishment
- Oral warning given
- Incident located, public order restored

For these incidents (enumerated in Figure 1), there was a reduction at all 10 parks of between 14% and 89%, with a reduction of 71% for all parks combined, with the reduction for each park listed in Table 1. This indicates that public safety conditions are improving in downtown parks.

Figure 1

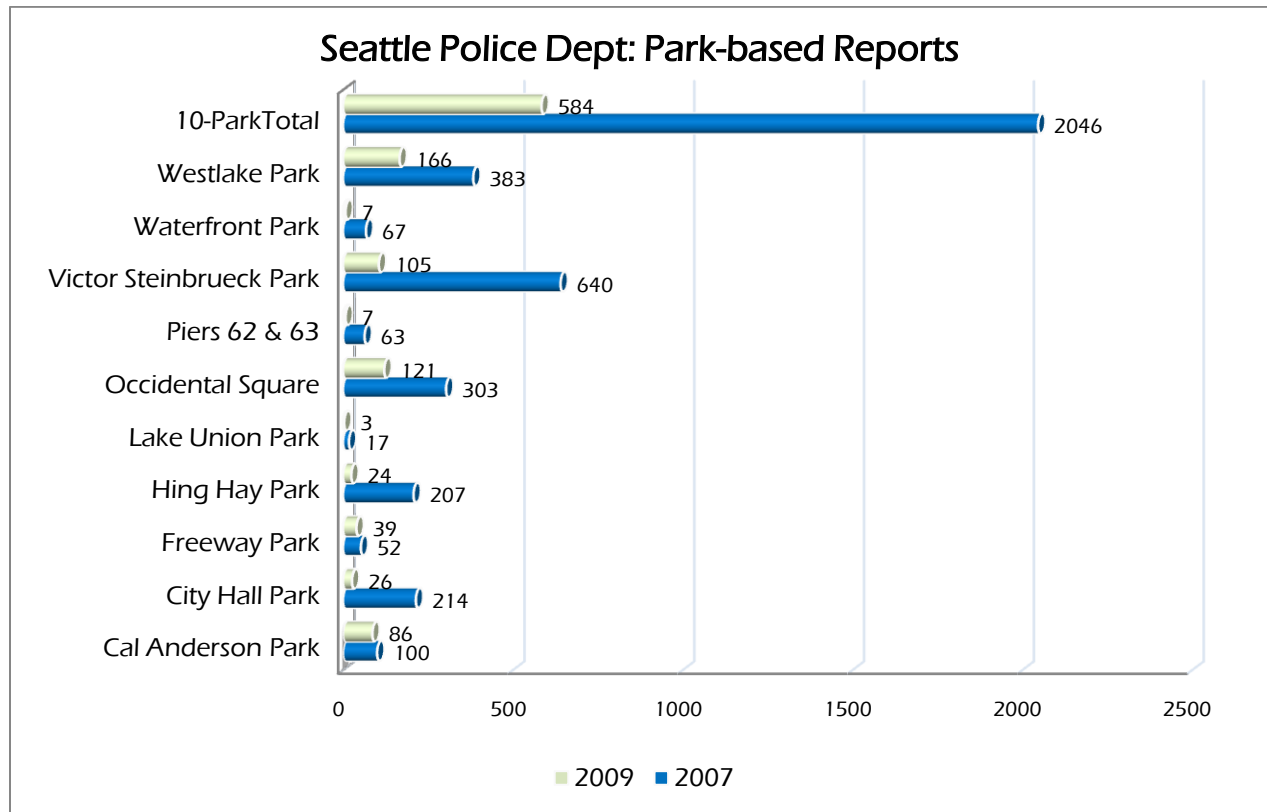


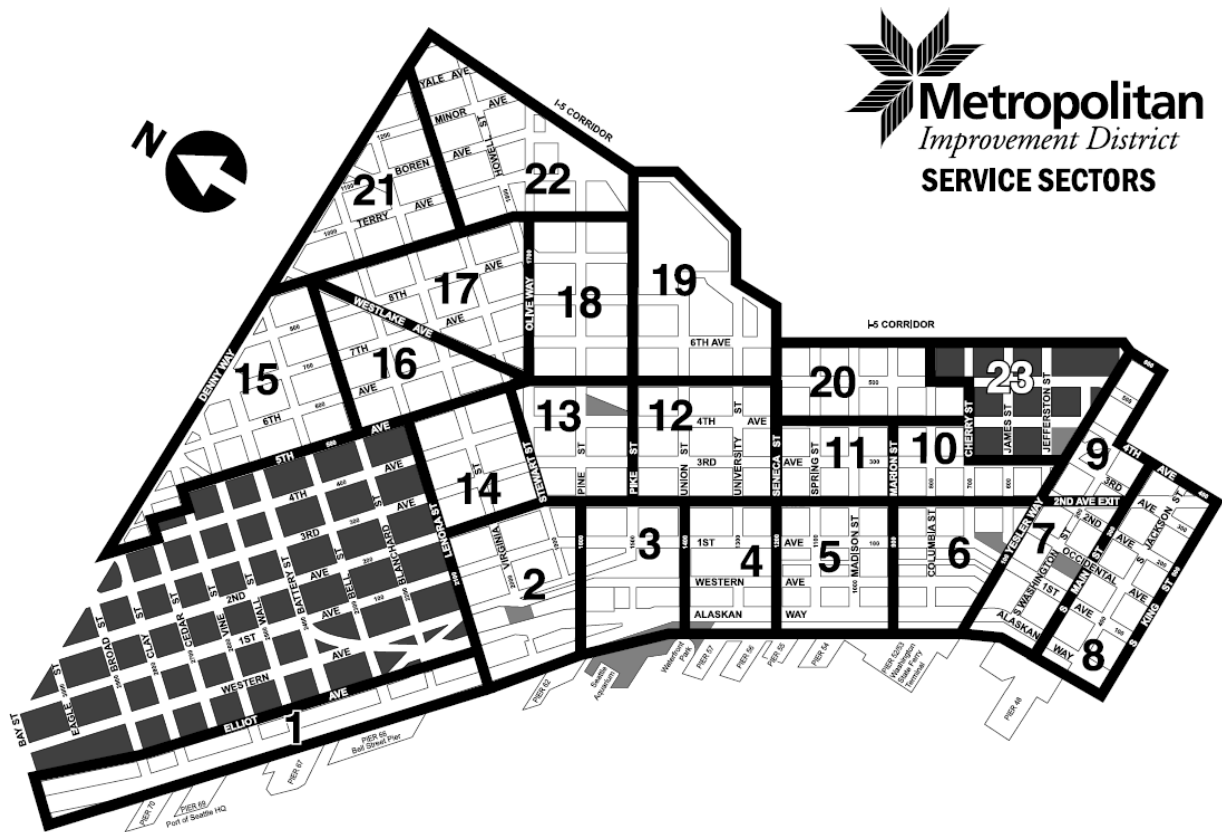
Table 1

Park Name	2009 change from 2007
Cal Anderson Park	-14%
City Hall Park	-88%
Freeway Park	-25%
Hing Hay Park	-88%
Lake Union Park	-82%
Occidental Square	-60%
Piers 62 & 63	-89%
Victor Steinbrueck Park	-84%
Waterfront Park	-90%
Westlake Park	-57%
Combined	-71%

Metropolitan Improvement District (MID)

Incident reports are mostly collected from MID ambassadors. The data base log is similar to the log kept by the Park Rangers. Entries are coded by sector as shown in Figure 2, and are not park specific.

Figure 2



We selected those sectors which contain or are adjacent to one or more of the focus parks, as shown in Figure 2. Cal Anderson Park and Lake Union Park are far outside the MID area and have no data. Hing Hay Park and Freeway are outside though adjacent and we used the closest sector for data.

Table 2

MID Sector	Parks Within or Adjacent to Sector
2	Pier 62/63 Victor Steinbrueck
3 and 4	Waterfront
7	Occidental
13	Westlake
19	Freeway
9 and 23	City Hall

MID began collecting the data only at the start of 2008 and reduced the number of ambassadors from 30 to 27 in July 2009 so that there was a change in the number of reports overall being generated. With

the Park Rangers starting activity in June 2008, the best comparison periods for non-SPD codes are July 2007 through June 2008 and July 2008 through June 2009. The data is filtered out of both periods as there is no data on them for the first part of the earlier period for comparison.

Only some data are activities relevant to parks, so the non-related ones are filtered out. Some data relate to positive incidents that are desirable to increase, and some for negative ones that are desirable to decrease. So the analysis looked at two filterings, for positive incident codes and negative ones. The positive incidents shown in Figure 3 are:

- Directions Inside MID
- Directions Outside MID
- Directions to Government/Service
- Directions to Retail Core Provided
- Human Service Contact & Referral
- Leaf Pick-Up
- Merchant Handout Delivered
- Merchant Introduction of MID
- New Storefront Business
- Pressure Washing
- Public Introduction of MID
- Transit/Bus Information Provided

Combining all sectors, the analysis in Table 3 shows an increase of positive, desirable incidents of 7%. This increase supports the goals of the Center City Parks Task Force.

Figure 3

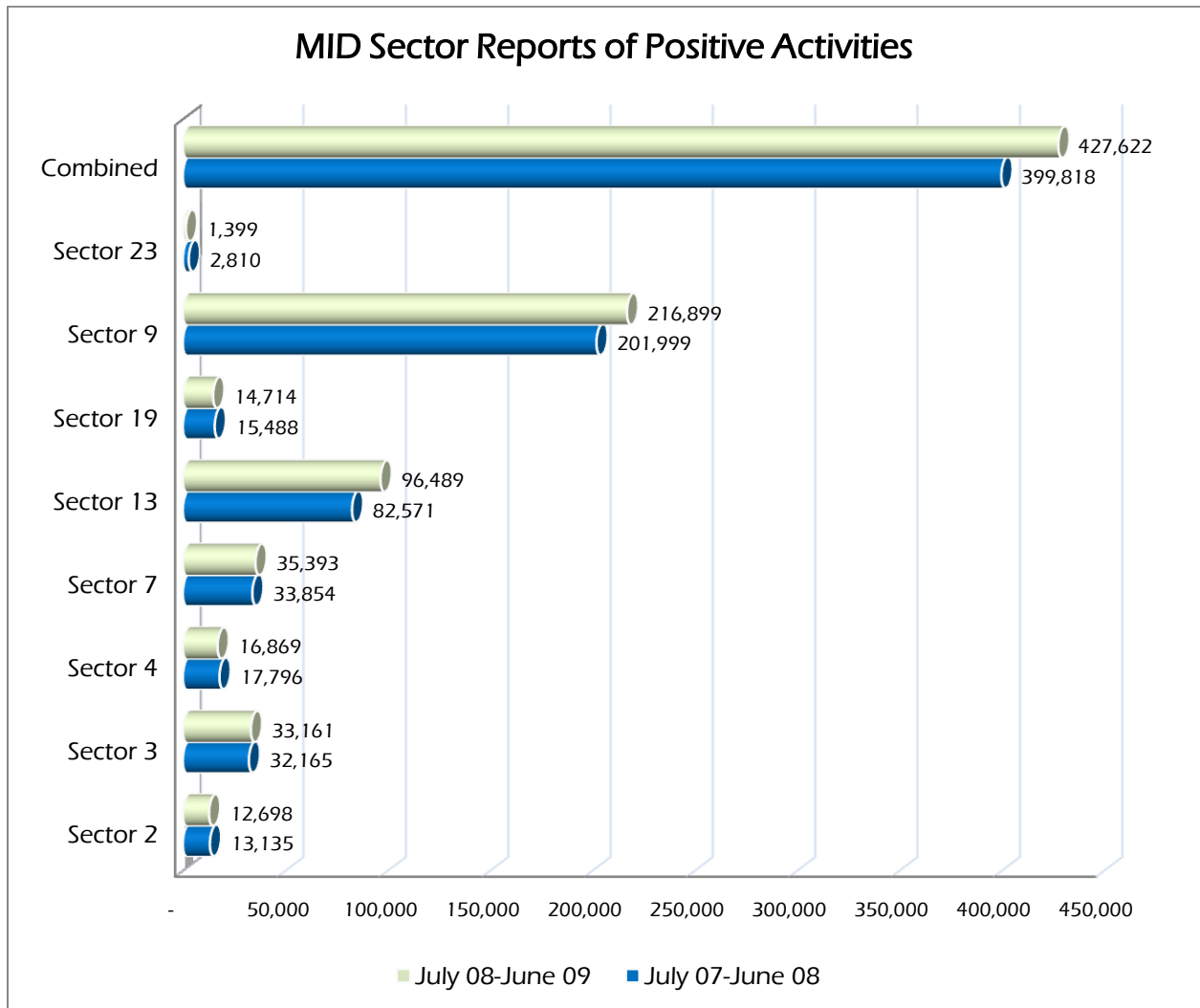


Table 3

% Change 08-09 from 07-08		
Sector	Associated Parks	
2	Victor Steinbrueck, Pier 62/63	-3%
3	Waterfront Park	3%
4	Waterfront Park	-5%
7	Occidental	5%
13	Westlake	17%
19	Freeway	-5%
9	City Hall	7%
23	City Hall (small data sample)	-50%
Combined		7%

Negative incidents shown in Figure 4 included:

- 911 Called for Medical Assistance
- 911 Called for Sobering Unit Van
- 911 Crime Report
- Alcohol Activity Observed
- Closed Storefront Business
- DA Referral - for clean team
- Drug Activity Observed
- Empty Alcohol Container
- Escort Provided
- Graffiti Removal - Public Property
- Human Waste Removal
- Illegal Dumping Reports
- Illegal Vendor Observed
- Merchant Request for Services
- Pedestrian Interference / Sit & Lie Approach
- Public Urination Observed
- Trash Can Cleaning
- Trash Can Top Off
- Trespass Observed

Overall negative activities remained about the same, as shown in Table 4. This is the combined effect of drops in Sectors 2/Victor Steinbrueck-Pier62, 7/Occidental, and 19/Freeway, and an increase in Sector 13/Westlake. Changes to both positive and negative activities indicate improved conditions in the downtown sectors near parks.

Figure 4

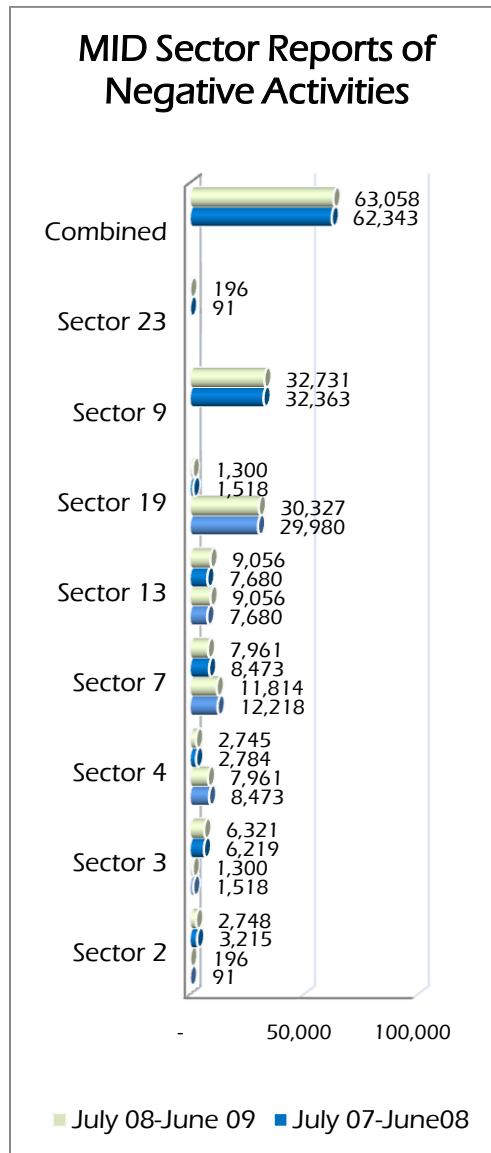


Table 4

% Change 08-09 from 07-08		
Sector	Associated Parks	
2	Victor Steinbrueck, Pier 62/63	-15%
3	Waterfront Park	2%
4	Waterfront Park	-1%
7	Occidental	-6%
13	Westlake	18%
19	Freeway	-14%
9	City Hall	1%
23	City Hall (small data sample)	115%
Combined		1%

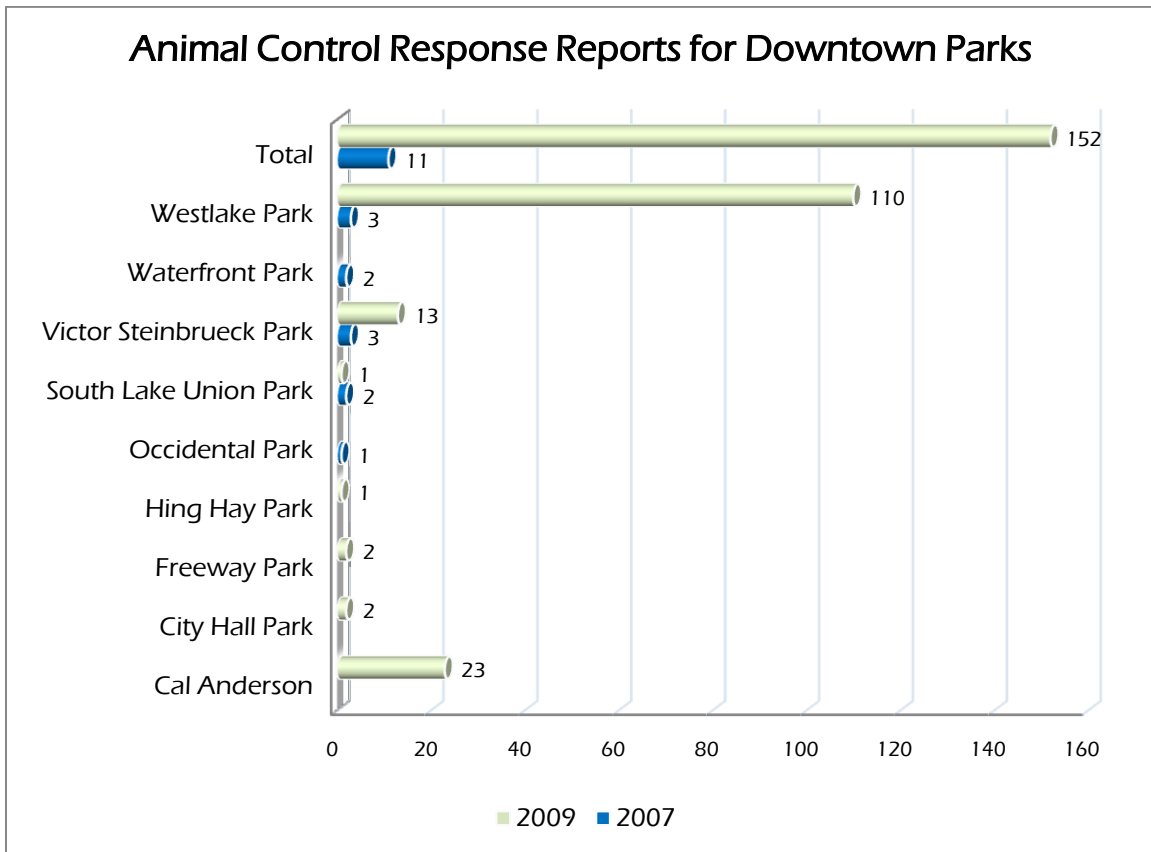
Seattle Animal Control

Incident reports are collected from Animal Control officers. Location information allows selection by park name. Full year data is consistent, so comparison between 2007 and 2009 was done. However, the number of incidents is too small to indicate trends. Incidents included in the analysis are patrol activity, response to complaints, and follow-up on citizen declarations. Filtered out were incidents relating to other follow-up calls and to wild animals. There was a Mayoral directive to be in Westlake every day of Summer in 2009, therefore calls at Westlake dominate the 2009 activity. Removal of the Westlake data gives a better picture of typical activity. There is no data for Pier 62/63.

Incidents in Figure 5 included for analysis of contacts in general include:

- Citation
- 2nd Citation Count
- Contacted
- Dangerous Citation Issued
- Escaped, Gone
- Exclusionary Notice Issued
- License Sold
- No Violation Observed
- Verbal Warning
- Violations Observed

Figure 5

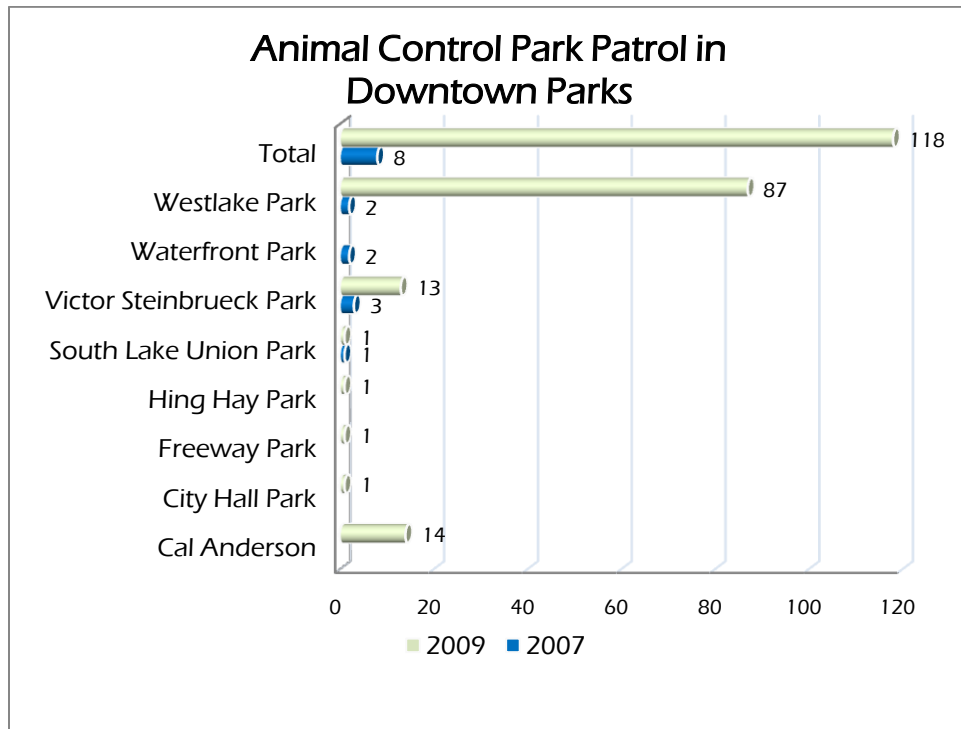


Analysis of a subset related to enforcement (Figure 6) gives an indication of the effect of emphasis patrol:

- Citation
- 2nd Citation Count
- Dangerous Citation Issued
- Exclusionary Notice Issued
- Violations Observed

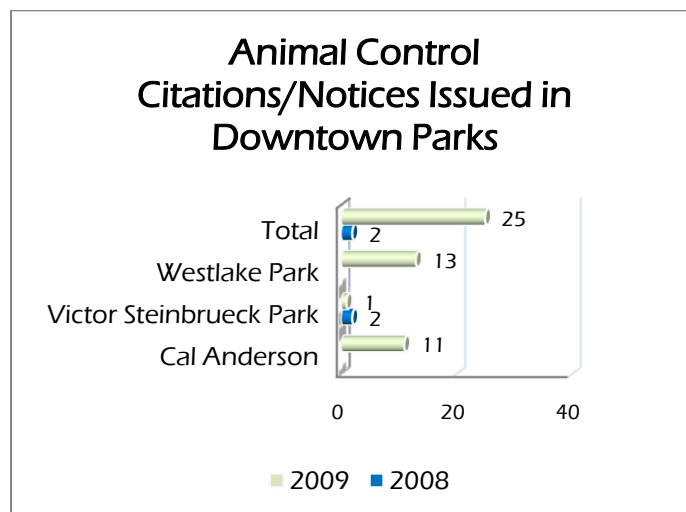
Parks not listed had no enforcement incidents.

Figure 6



There is also a code for park patrol specifically, which gives an indication of the presence of Animal Control Officers (Figure 7) in the parks, again with 2009 reflecting the emphasis patrol at Westlake.

Figure 7



None for 2007 or in parks not listed.

Table 5

Park	ACO Responses		Additional Park Patrol		Citation or Notice Issued	
	2007	2009	2007	2009	2008	2009
Cal Anderson	0	23	0	14	0	11
City Hall	0	2	0	1	0	0
Freeway	0	2	0	1	0	0
Hing Hay	0	1	0	1	0	0
Lake Union	3	1	3	1	0	0
Occidental	1	0	0	0	0	0
Victor Steinbrueck	6	13	4	13	2	1
Waterfront	1	0	1	0	0	0
Westlake	1	110	1	87	0	13
Total	12	152	9	118	2	25

Seattle Fire Department

Incident is data collected from all calls and typed in by response. Data is consistent across years so the comparison is between 2007 and 2009. Locations are based on street address, so we needed to filter out only those types related to parks. Of these calls, 95% relate to emergency aid or medical calls. These are the codes included for analysis as shown in Figure 8:

- Aid
- Assist SPD
- Assault with weapon
- Fuel Spill
- Illegal Burn
- Medic response
- Pier fire
- Rubbish fire

The combined change for all parks is a reduction from 2007 to 2009 of 18% as shown in Table 6. This includes increases at Cal Anderson Park of 109% and at Victor Steinbrueck of 23%. The general increase may reflect better or earlier intervention in social welfare situations, a task of the Park Rangers.

Figure 8

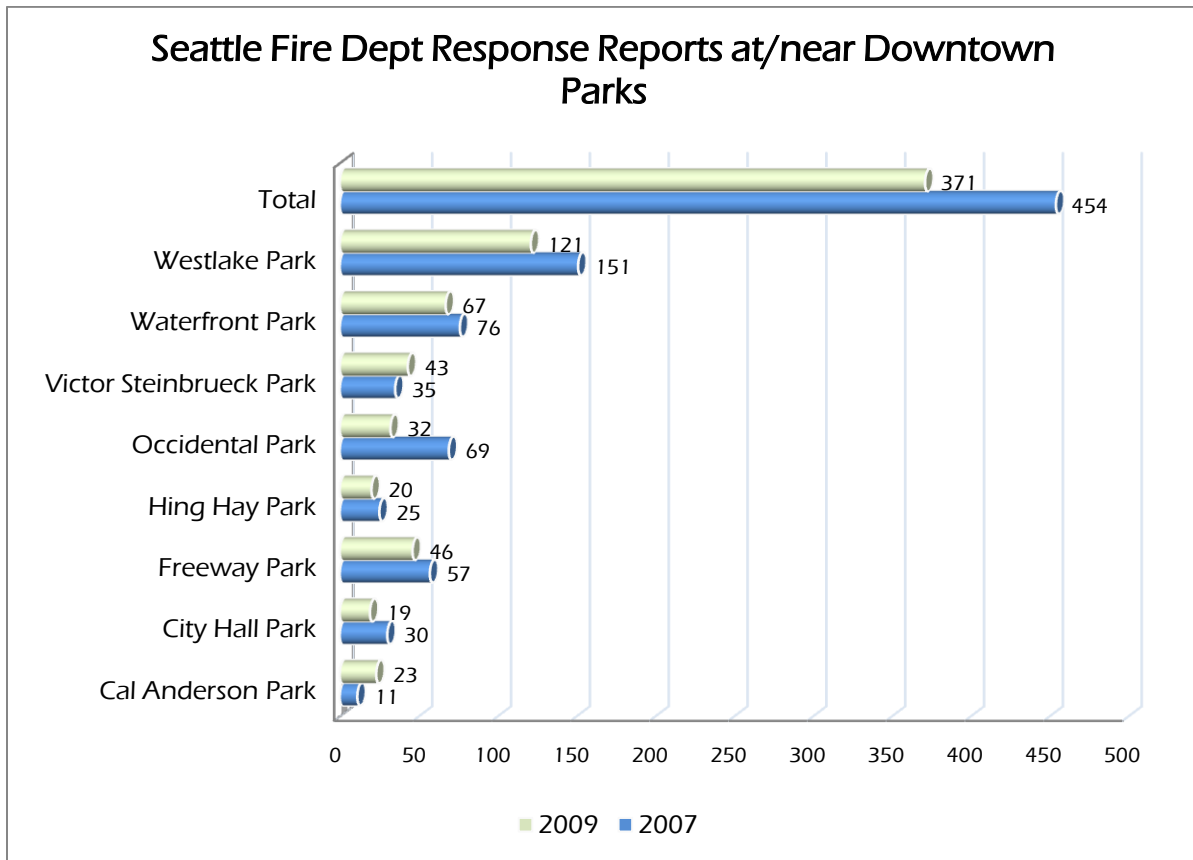


Table 6

% Change 2009 from 2007	
Near/At Park	
Cal Anderson Park	109%
City Hall Park	-37%
Freeway Park	-19%
Hing Hay Park	-20%
Occidental Park	-54%
Victor Steinbrueck Park	23%
Waterfront Park	-12%
Westlake Park	-20%
Combined	-18%

Parks Work Order System

This data base is a log of all calls for repair and maintenance work for parks. Most calls relate to projects or routine work. The system has a filter for vandalism, which is between 25% and 30% of all calls, and is nearly always graffiti. The vast majority (over 80%) of vandalism/graffiti calls relate to Freeway or Cal Anderson Parks where the numbers of incidents has declined slightly from 175 to 161. Filtering out

these two parks shows at the remaining parks a slight rise of vandalism work orders from 41 in 2007 to 54 in 2009. This could be due to greater vigilance and reporting of graffiti, or to particular taggers being more active at these parks. With the small number of reports, it does not indicate a social trend.

Parks Events Scheduling

The Events Scheduling Office tracks all bookings by parks, so that the downtown ones can be selected for analysis. The data is consistent from 2007 to 2009, except for the possible impact of the park closures mentioned at the beginning of this section. The analysis filtered out film shoots and major events as not community generated. Many events in 2008 related to election year. About half of the remainder are political rallies and product promotions, making use of central locations. There is a larger decline between 2007 and 2008 likely due to economic downturn, and a smaller decline from 2008 to 2009. Community driven events declined from 207 in 2007 to 134 in 2009. However, average attendance per event has risen, from 171 in 2007 to 270 in 2009. Total attendance has risen slightly from 35,409 in 2007 to 36,226 in 2009. These are the types of events included in the analysis shown in Table 7:

- Special Event
- Wedding/Ceremony
- Meeting
- Party
- Private Event
- Center Activity

Table 7

	2007		2009	
Location	Number of Events	Attendance	Number of Events	Attendance
Cal Anderson Park	74	5,155	61	4,871
City Hall Park	2	400	0	0
Freeway Park	11	729	Closed	Closed
Hing Hay Park	23	17,900	11	20,605
Occidental Square	21	3,550	35	7,425
Victor Steinbrueck Park	51	1,595	5	450
Waterfront Park	2	2,200	7	975
Westlake Park	23	3,880	15	1,900
Total	207	35,409	134	36,226

There was some increase in the number of events scheduled to start after 6 p.m. as shown in Table 8, which along with the greater attendance may indicate that people feel safer in the downtown parks. This occurred in spite of the general downward trend in number of events.

Table 8

Event Start Times Between		Change from 2007 to 2009
06:00 AM	or earlier	-6
06:00 AM	08:00 AM	-21
08:00 AM	10:00 AM	-16
10:00 AM	12:00 PM	-30
12:00 PM	02:00 PM	-2
02:00 PM	04:00 PM	15
04:00 PM	06:00 PM	-40
After	06:00 PM	18
Total Change		-82

Parks Ball Fields Scheduling

The only park with sports facilities in this study is Bobby Morris Playfield at Cal Anderson Park. The analysis shown in Table 9 indicates adult bookings for both baseball and soccer increased. Youth bookings decreased but this may relate to school athletics or league choices rather than to conditions at Cal Anderson Park.

Table 9

		Number of Bookings		
Age Group	Sport	2007	2009	Change
Youth	Baseball	322	281	-41
	Soccer	612	494	-118
Adult	Baseball	147	152	5
	Soccer	248	276	28



Parks Volunteer Program

Seattle Parks and Recreation Volunteer office collects reports from volunteer groups and from district crew chiefs about volunteer activities. Center City Parks volunteer activity has been tracked as a Mayoral priority. In 2009, volunteer activity focused on Lake Union, Occidental, Freeway and Hing Hay, and included two major clean up events. The decrease in the hours per volunteer may relate to the pressures of the economic recession. The increase in the number of volunteers indicates more community involvement. Changes are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Year	2007	2008	2009
Volunteer hours	1,607	8,474	4,732
Number of Volunteers	NC	564	1,103

Center City Program Survey

The main purpose of the questionnaire that the Center City Parks program posted on Survey Monkey was to get feedback on its activation efforts. This was first done in November 2009. City Hall and Lake Union were left out initially as the program is doing very few activities in those parks. Lake Union Park was specifically excluded as it has been under construction since this program began. It also has a great deal of its own programming. For the first two years of the program, City Hall Park was undergoing design planning and discussions about King County taking it over.

The survey contained one question rating program elements that included the Park Rangers. Response rates are shown in Table 11. On a scale of 1 = "Love It" to 5 = "Hate It", the Park Rangers were given an average score of 1.96 ("Do Like It"), a definitely positive response.

Table 11

Program	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Park Rangers	33.3% (35)	16.2% (17)	9.5% (10)	4.8% (5)	3.8% (4)	32.4% (34)

Park Rangers Log

The Park Rangers log collects entries from patrols and codes the incidents as follows:

Positive encounters: Positive encounters are when Rangers make direct contact with park users, parks neighbors, community group or any stake holder to promote safety and activation of our parks. Examples include checking on a person's well being, handing out Junior Ranger Badges, giving tourists directions, and coordinating with the Orion Center to put on a Citywide Youth Outreach Fair.

Property protection: Property protection encompasses inspection and protection of park property, managing vandalism, graffiti and maintenance by working with trades and grounds maintenance staff to track and prevent property damage.

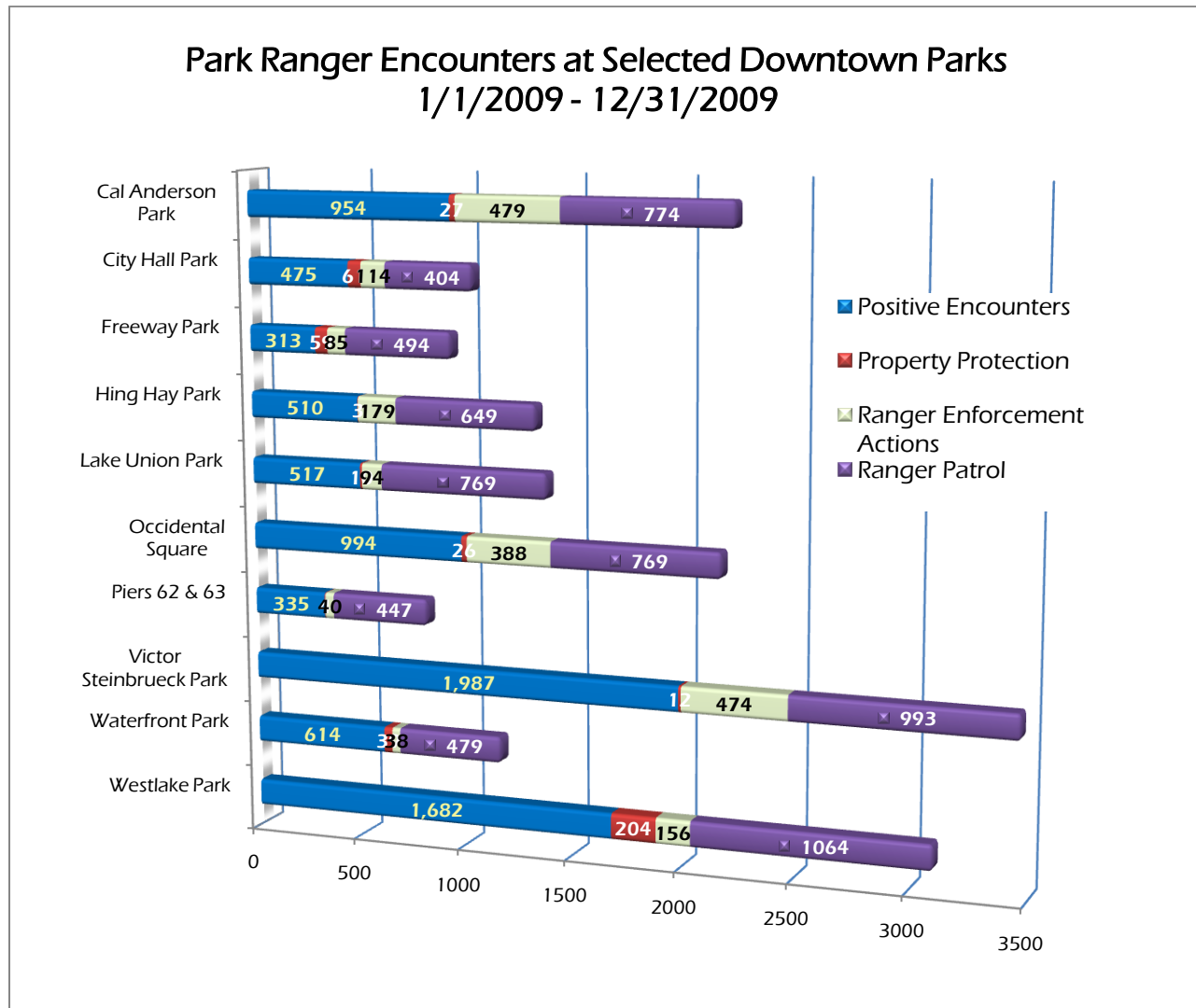
Ranger enforcement actions: Ranger enforcement actions relate to enforcement of the Park Code or a park rule by using voluntary compliance or the issuance of a Park exclusion citation.

Ranger patrols: Each individual bike, vehicle or foot visit to a park is logged as a "ranger park patrol." Encounters or activities that occur during these patrols are logged according to the three main categories described above: property protection, positive encounters, and ranger enforcement action.



The log began with the start of the program in May 2008. However, the data program for entry was changed in October 2008 so the data format is not consistent between 2008 and 2009. There is full year data for 2009 which is analyzed below in Figure 9. While Park Rangers do visit some other parks for a variety of reasons, 82% of all patrol time is at the downtown parks.

Figure 9



In addition to their main role patrolling and supporting community use of our parks, the Rangers have addressed a number of larger security issues, and continued their training:

- They've joined the Citywide Youth Outreach effort to address the needs of the homeless youth who congregate in Westlake and Freeway parks.
- Along with staff from Center City Parks Program, they worked with the Youth Care arm of the Orion Center, New Horizons, University District Street Youth Ministries and many others to coordinate outreach fairs for homeless youth in Westlake Park. We held one fair in 2008 and two in 2009.
- Rangers have become certified instructors for Management of Aggressive Behavior (MOAB), a course that teaches principles, techniques and skills for recognizing, reducing and managing violent and aggressive behavior with humanity and compassion. The Rangers have customized this nationally recognized course to address the needs of frontline Parks and Recreation

employees—in community centers, on maintenance crews and elsewhere. To date, 151 Parks employees have received this training from the Rangers.

- They have completed a “Command of Spanish” course to learn specific Spanish words, phrases, and questions that will facilitate communication with Spanish speaking subjects, witnesses and victims.
- They have completed a 20-hour Street Smart Bike Training course.
- While patrolling, the Rangers often need to go above and beyond their basic role. For example: Two Rangers encountered a homeless woman in Westlake Park wearing a rain slicker over a hospital gown and booties. They learned that she’d been living in the park, and had become ill, was sent to Harborview Hospital, and subsequently lost all the belongings she’d left behind. The Rangers found clothing for her at the Women’s Wellness Center and, helped her contact her son in Spokane, and get a bus ticket home.
- Collaboration with SPD continues. Rangers have attended police roll calls, ridden with the police, sat in with 911 operators during their initial training, and conducted a second shift patrol with the support of the Community Police Team. At the operational level --community police team, police officer level – the Rangers have a good working relationship with SPD.
- Park Rangers gained the authority to write Park Exclusions in June 2008 and Notices of Infraction in August 2009. Since that time 37 Exclusions/Notices of Infraction have been issued by a park ranger. While this is not a focal point of the job, it remains an important tool for Park Rangers to discourage negative activity and promote a safe atmosphere. Seattle Police officers also write Park Exclusion notices, from 2007 to 2009 there was a 17% drop in the number of Exclusions written by police officers in the ten downtown parks.

New Evaluation Tools

Park Rangers Survey

To establish a baseline for future assessments of the Park Rangers, in April and May 2010, Parks staff conducted a survey of park neighbors, and contacted community and business organizations. We used both paper surveys and a commonly used online survey tool called Survey Monkey. We received 84 responses from both the paper and online survey. The form is shown in Attachment 1.

The first question was to test awareness of the program and to validate responses to later questions. 75 of 84 respondents are aware of the park ranger program. Of the respondents, 22 identified themselves as business owners, 11 as a downtown resident, 14 are affiliated with downtown organizations, 3 work downtown, and 11 described themselves as park users.

Of the 75 aware of the program, 34 have seen Park Rangers patrolling weekly, and 51 had seen a ranger in at least the last quarter. 52 have spoken with a park ranger, and of those 21 received park ranger assistance. Park Rangers appear to have good visibility as respondents reported seeing or encountering them in nearly twice (1.72 times) as many parks as those which they reported visiting frequently. By

park, the frequency of those sightings corresponds to those parks which Park Rangers patrol most frequently, Westlake and Victor Steinbrueck.

Responses to individual assessment items:

- Asked about whether they agree or disagree with the statement “Park Rangers encourage positive activity in the parks they patrol,” 63 out of 76 agreed.



- On “The presence of Park Rangers in downtown parks contributes to a welcoming and respectful atmosphere,” 53 out of 65 agreed.
- On “Park Rangers discourage illegal and anti-social behavior in the parks they patrol,” 19 out of 26 agreed.
- On “Park Rangers provide valuable information about city attractions, park events, and safety to park patrons,” 46 out of 62 agreed.
- On “I would be more likely to attend an event (e.g. night market, dancing, concert) in a downtown park if I knew Park Rangers were going to be present during the event,” 47 out of 68 agreed.
- On “The park ranger’s job is to provide a presence, help the parks feel safe, and deter illegal and anti-social behavior in downtown parks. How effective is this program?,” 48 out of 69 responded very or somewhat effective and 3 responded very ineffective.
- On “Based on your experience with Park Rangers, you believe the park ranger program should,” 52 out of 26 responded “expand” and only 9 “retract”. The remaining 8 said “stay the same.”

Community Involvement

To establish relationships with the downtown community and gain a better understanding of concerns, Park Rangers regularly attend community meetings. This includes International District/Chinatown Public Safety, MID roll calls, Pioneer Square Association safety meetings, police roll calls, and coalition of homeless outreach service providers.

Park Rangers attend many formal meetings, but often informal encounters and outreach helps build relationships and provide better service. Park Rangers commonly make stops at businesses/neighbors

impacted by the park. This includes International Business Improvement Area, See's Candies, Westlake Center, Sephora, The Seattle Aquarium, and Pioneer Square Association to name a few. Park Rangers have been consulted on several occasions to address safety concerns outside the downtown area. This has included assessing problems at community centers, addressing CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design) issues at a park, and addressing community concerns at District Council meetings.

Park Rangers also work closely with staff to address problems and to stay informed of constantly changing issues as they arise at the parks. Park maintenance staff made note of the utility and value of Park Rangers. One staff believed Rangers increase safety in the park and appreciated the professional level of training Park Rangers offer to other park employees. Another employee took note of Rangers' ability to gain cooperation with difficult groups who distract from maintenance tasks.

Park Rangers make use of several tools available to address concerns of the community and constantly seek new tools to gain information. One new tool being utilized is monitoring community blogs. On a weekly basis, Rangers check blogs to check for non-permitted events, community concerns, and to guide daily patrols.



Conclusion

Overall the analysis of both the existing and new data indicate a favorable assessment of the Park Rangers program. As discussed at the beginning of this report, the data alone do not allow the improvements documented to be clearly attributable to the Park Rangers. Table 12 below summarizes what each data source indicates as an assessment of the program.

Table 12

Data Source	Measure	Change	Assessment
SPD	Incidents	Declined 71%	Favorable
MID log	Positive entries	Increased 7%	Favorable
MID log	Negative entries	Stable	Neutral
Animal Control Officer	Patrol and citations	Both increased	Favorable
SFD	Aid incidents	Declined 18%	Favorable
Parks WO	Graffiti responses	Slight increase	Neutral
Parks Events	Number Attendance Time of day	Decreased Slight increase More in evening	Unclear Favorable Favorable
Ball field	Adult bookings	Slight increase	Favorable
Parks Volunteers	Number Hours	Increased decreased	Favorable Neutral
Center City survey	Ratings	(Positive, no comparison year)	Favorable
Park Ranger log	Patrol activity	(Positive, no comparison year)	Favorable
Park Ranger survey	Ratings	(Positive, no comparison year)	Favorable
Community letters	Comments	(Positive, no comparison year)	Favorable

In Attachments A through D are letters from community organizations supporting the Park Rangers:

- Pioneer Square Community Association,
- Center City Parks Task Force Follow-up Committee,
- Chinatown International District Business Improvement Area, and
- Seattle Aquarium.

Recommendations

Evidence of improving conditions at downtown parks supports the continuation and possible expansion of the Park Ranger Program. Parks recommends continued coordination with Seattle Police Department, Seattle Fire Department, the Metropolitan Improvement District, Seattle Animal Control, Parks grounds and maintenance units, Parks Volunteer Programs, and the Center City Parks Program.

As the Park Rangers are part of the Center City Parks program, of which the strategies work in synergy, we recommend that future assessments be of the entire program, with the Park Rangers considered in that context.

For several reasons we recommend the consideration of additional Park Rangers to allow better response of safety and security concerns system wide. This includes issues ranging from leash law enforcement to drug dealing in parks. Expansion would allow Seattle Parks and Recreation to equitably address problems that distract from public enjoyment throughout the system.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Letter of Support from Pioneer Square Community Association
- Attachment B: Letter of Support from Center City Parks Task Force
- Attachment C: Letter of Support from Chinatown/International District Business Improvement Association
- Attachment D: Letter of Support from Seattle Aquarium.
- Attachment 1: Park Ranger Program Survey

ATTACHMENT 1

Park Ranger Program Survey: Share your thoughts!

The Seattle Parks Department would like your input on the Park Ranger program. The program started in June, 2008 and strives to foster a safe, secure and civil environment in downtown parks. Please take a few moments to complete this survey and help us prioritize our service to you. Your time is greatly appreciated. When you are finished, please place this survey in the postage paid envelope and put it into any mailbox by April 28th.

1. Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation created a park ranger program in May, 2008. The goals of the program are to foster a safe, secure, and civil environment in downtown parks. Are you aware of Park Ranger program?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If you answered "yes," please continue to fill out this survey. If you answered "no," thank you for your time and please return this form as we are checking the level of public awareness about this program. Your response is important.

2. Please indicate the category that best describes you. Please check the most appropriate box.

- ☐ Downtown park user
- ☐ Downtown business owner
- ☐ Downtown resident
- ☐ Downtown community group leader
- ☐ Seattle Area Resident Visiting Downtown
- ☐ Tourist or "Out of Area" Visitor
- ☐ Other: Please explain _____

3. How often have you seen a Park Ranger on patrol?

- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ 1-3 months
- ☐ Seldom
- ☐ Never

3a. What is the highest level of contact you have had with a Park Ranger? (please check one)

- ☐ Seen
- ☐ Spoken with a ranger
- ☐ A park Ranger provided me assistance(e.g. addressed safety concern, provided directions)
- ☐ None

4. Please mark below all parks at which you have seen or encountered a Park Ranger.

- ☐ Cal Anderson Park and Bobby Morris Playfield
- ☐ City Hall Park
- ☐ Freeway Park
- ☐ Hing Hay Park
- ☐ Lake Union Park
- ☐ Occidental Square
- ☐ Piers 62 & 63
- ☐ Victor Steinbrueck Park
- ☐ Waterfront Park
- ☐ Westlake Park/Plaza

4a. Which of these parks do you visit most frequently? _____

5. Park Rangers encourage positive activity in the parks they patrol.

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| ___(1)Strongly Agree | ___(3)Disagree |
| ___(2)Agree | ___(4)Strongly Disagree |
| | ___(5)Not Sure |

6. The presence of Park Rangers in downtown parks contributes to a welcoming and respectful atmosphere.

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| ___(1)Strongly Agree | ___(3)Disagree |
| ___(2)Agree | ___(4)Strongly Disagree |
| | ___(5)Not Sure |

7. Park Rangers discourage illegal and anti-social behavior in the parks they patrol.

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| ___(1)Strongly Agree | ___(3)Disagree |
| ___(2)Agree | ___(4)Strongly Disagree |
| | ___(5)Not Sure |

8. Park Rangers provide valuable information about city attractions, park events, and safety to park patrons.

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| ___(1)Strongly Agree | ___(3)Disagree |
| ___(2)Agree | ___(4)Strongly Disagree |
| | ___(5)Not Sure |

9. I would be more likely to attend an event (e.g. night market, dancing, concert) in a downtown park if I knew Park Rangers were going to be present during the event.

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| ___(1)Strongly Agree | ___(3)Disagree |
| ___(2)Agree | ___(4)Strongly Disagree |
| | ___(5)Not Sure |

10. The Park Ranger's job is to provide a presence, help the parks feel safe, and deter illegal and anti-social behavior in downtown parks. How effective is this program?

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| ___(1)Very effective | ___(3)Somewhat Ineffective |
| ___(2)Somewhat effective | ___(4)Very Ineffective |
| | ___(5)Not Sure |

11. The Park Rangers currently have a staff of five in the field. Based on your experience with Park Rangers, and the overall goal to maintain parks for safety, security, and civil behavior, you believe the Park Ranger program should:

- ☐ expand
- ☐ remain the same size
- ☐ retract
- ☐ not sure

12. Please take a moment to share any comments, suggestions, or personal interactions with the Park Rangers.

Optional: Name (or business name) and address: _____

THANK YOU FOR FILLING OUT THIS SURVEY.